DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 057 491 EA 003 919

TITLE The Selection of Public School Administrators.
INSTITUTION Pennsylvania State Dept. of Education, Harrisburg. Bureau of Administrative Leadership Services.
PUB DATE Jan 71
NOTE 42p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Personnel; *Administrator Characteristics; Administrator Evaluation; *Administrator Qualifications; *Administrator Selection; Boards of Education; Guidelines; *Principals; *Superintendents

ABSTRACT

This report provides information that will hopefully enable those concerned to determine a course of action conducive to filling public school administrative positions with educators who fulfill the expectations demanded of them. Individual approaches to the selection of both superintendents and principals are offered. Appendixes contain (1) applicant criteria for the position of superintendent, (2) criteria for selecting a superintendent, (3) applicant criteria for the position of principal, (4) suggested questions for school director interviews of candidates for the district superintendency, and (5) interview evaluation. (Author/JF)

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The Selection of Public School Administrators

Published by:
Bureau of Administrative Leadership Services
Pennsylvania Department of Education
January 1971

EA 003 919

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Milton J. Shapp, Governor

Department of Education
David H. Kurtzman, Secretary

Commissioner of Basic Education
B. Anton Hess

Assistant Commissioner for School Administration
Herbert E. Bryan

Bureau of Administrative Leadership Services
Burt L. Dunmire, Director
Robert L. Adams, Specialist
Benjamin D. Hengst, Specialist

Art work by Tom Ross

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Box 911
Harrisburg, Pa. 17126

PREFACE

To secure information pertaining to several areas in which Pennsylvania educators had indicated an interest, the Bureau of Administrative Leadership Services of the Pennsylvania Department of Education mailed a questionnaire to 104 selected county superintendents, district superintendents, supervising principals, elementary principals and professors of education in institutions of higher education. The selection was made in such a way as to assure responses from schools of various sizes, from schools in all sections of the state and from educators representing various levels of educational background and types of experience.

Although only the first two are of prime importance for this particular publication, the form mailed included the following five questions:

1. What procedure should, or might, be followed in the selection of a chief school administrator?
2. What procedure should, or might, be followed in the selection of a principal?
3. What would constitute a good program for the in-service growth of the chief administrator?
4. What would constitute a good program for the in-service growth of principals?
5. What personnel policies, relative to administrators, are in operation in your school system?

The Bureau of Administrative Leadership Services received a return of approximately 60 per cent of the questionnaires mailed to Commonwealth educators. A major portion of the information contained

herein was derived from those returns.

Deep gratitude is expressed to those persons who, in spite of the demands on their time, provided the basic information on which this material is based. Gratitude is expressed, too, to the several educators who read and made suggestions for change on the original draft of this publication.

The material on the following pages, even though it does express some basic beliefs, is not intended as a recommended program in any sense of the word. Neither is it to be construed as being the policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Rather, it is a presentation of ideas to be used as it appears desirable.

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INTRODUCTION

"The superintendency of schools is one of the most crucial and perhaps most difficult public positions in American life today. The occupant of this position, more than any other single person in the community, influences the shape of public education. Thus he has a basic role in determining what will become of the young people of his community, and through them what his community and the nation will become."[1]

Such was the complexity of the superintendency as it was viewed by a major educational organization over five years ago. Since 1965 a number of additional forces have surged to the foreground--student unrest, teacher militancy, negotiations, increasing financial problems, accountability, along with others--adding substantially to the crucial aspect of the position.

Hence, for any school district, the implications for educational growth within the community inherent in the selection of a chief administrator are such that it is vitally important that boards of education use, in their approach to the selection, those procedures which carry the greatest promise for assuring the selection of the most capable administrator available. Moreover, in emphasizing the importance of the selection of the chief administrator, no board of education and no chief administrator should reduce to a minor role the importance of the selection of a principal. This position, too, is a strategic one in the growth of the school.

All this is particularly true today at a time when schools are

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[1] Educational Policies Commission. The Unique Role of the Superintendent of Schools. Washington, D.C.: The National Education Association, 1965, page 1.

making, as a matter of course, changes which a few years ago would have been viewed as revolutionary in nature. In effecting today's changes, it has been stated that the administrator is the key figure. Studies have revealed that important changes occur only in school systems where administrators sponsor change. Other studies have shown a significant correlation between the amount of staff inventiveness and the staff's perception of the principal's support for innovative teaching.

There can be only one chief administrator in a school district. That individual is supported by a varying number of other administrators, ranging from perhaps two or three principals in the small district to several hundred principals and assistant superintendents in the largest school districts. If a school district is to move forward as the times demand, all the administrators--whether they number two or two hundred--must embody a high level of leadership which will inspire confidence and the will and desire for growth among staff members.

The efforts expended in the selection of administrators, the quality of the men and women sought for administrative posts in a given district, the importance attached to the administrative positions--these are indicative more of the value a board of school directors places on a school and its administrative positions than upon the value the board places on persons as individuals. In any selection process emphasis must be placed upon the position and upon securing the individual who can meet the requirements of the position. Hence, when salaries are determined for administrative positions, a dollar value is placed on the school and the position, not on the person selected. Boards of school directors might well consider such an attitude, or philosophy, as basic to the selection of administrators. Securing an administrator for a given position at a

minimal salary is not necessarily an indication that the board of education has performed a coup and accordingly deserves the plaudits of the community. Quite the reverse could be true.

This publication is based on the assumption that nothing less than the utmost care in the selection of administrators of the public schools will suffice. With the stated assumption, the pages which follow attempt to provide information which will enable those concerned to determine a course of action which will, hopefully, enable them to fill administrative positions in public schools with educators who will fulfill the expectations to be demanded of them.

THE SELECTION OF A CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

The search for, and the final selection of, the chief administrator of a school district is pregnant with problems of real proportion, problems which can eventually produce deep satisfactions or which can burst forth with agonizing results both immediate and long range. This dilemma was emphasized recently by Harold Spears when he said, "In spite of its sincerity, the search (for a chief administrator) is often a blundering pilgrimage fraught with uncertainties that mark the odds against a promising relationship."[1]

The implications are clear. It is incumbent upon any board of school directors, wishing to obviate to as great a degree as possible any negative results, to approach the selection of a chief administrator fully aware of exactly what it wants in its chief administrator and fully knowledgeable about the procedures most likely to locate the man or woman with the desired qualifications.

The following pages attempt to aid any given school district in its development of a plan for the selection of a chief administrator basically through three approaches. The first approach is a brief reference to what the American Association of School Administrators suggests, in part, relative to the selection of a chief administrator. The second, in a little more detail, delineates the procedure followed recently by one Pennsylvania school district in seeking a superintendent of schools. The third approach

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[1] Harold Spears, "The Precarious Search: Hunting and Finding a New School Superintendent." Nation's Schools, September 1968, page 64.

attempts to draw together, in a somewhat loose fashion, a variety of procedures used by a number of Pennsylvania school districts.

American Association of School Administrators

Selection of a Superintendent

In a 1968 publication, Selecting a School Superintendent, the American Association of School Administrators poses questions relative to the selection of a chief administrator:

> "If the choice of a new superintendent is to be made with wisdom, board members must find answers to a number of questions, such as: (a) What are the essential steps in an effective selection procedure? (b) Who should be involved in the selection process? (c) What should the board expect from the outgoing superintendent? (d) How can able people be attracted? (e) What will the applicants want to know about the board and the school district? (f) How do you find out whether applicants possess the desired qualifications? (g) How do you select the 'right' one? (h) At what points in the selection process should public announcements be made?"[1]

These questions could well serve as a guide for a board of school directors as it initiates and develops a plan for the selection process. This same publication contains also a statement of and an elaboration upon ten steps which it says are usually involved in an "adequate" procedure. A board entering upon the selection of a new superintendent would find the publication, Selecting a School Superintendent, of much help.

One Pennsylvania School District

Selection of a Superintendent

Returns from the questionnaire referred to earlier provided

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[1] American Association of School Administrators, Selecting a School Superintendent. Washington, D.C.: American Association of School Administrators, 1968, page 2.

descriptions of procedures followed in numerous Pennsylvania school districts as the search for a new chief administrator was conducted. One of these descriptions is reproduced below. It is of a third class district and represents one of the more elaborate and more detailed descriptions submitted.

> This task (the selection of a new superintendent) has just been completed in School System A. Since we are still operating as a joint school system, the presidents of the six individual boards comprising the System, under the leadership of the president of the joint board, served as a committee to recommend procedures and do the screening necessary for the selection of a superintendent. This group first studied the AASA bulletin on Selection of a Superintendent. This served as a guide for most of their work. Next, we consulted with the educational administration departments of several nearby universities regarding the possibilities of a consultant to serve in this area. Our committee discussed this with _____ of _____ University, and upon its recommendation he was engaged by our board to do the initial screening. Essentially this included:
>
> 1. Preparation of a detailed description of the position including the schools, the community, the resources, present operation, future plans, etc. (This was done by the incumbent.)
>
> 2. The determination of the criteria for the screening of candidates. This was done by _____ of the University staff on the basis of previous experience.
>
> 3. Announcements to 75 schools of educational administration in universities from the East to the West Coast, with specific direction that all applications and all correspondence be sent to _____ at the University, where the paper screening was done.
>
> 4. Arrangements were made to interview selected candidates at Atlantic City during the AASA Convention. This was done mostly by _____ assisted by _____ of the University staff. But, in addition, several of our board members sat in on a number of these interviews. (This was to help them gain a perspective of the material which was available to them.)
>
> 5. Six candidates were selected for committee interview on three evenings in the same week. The committee took this group, two at a time, entertaining them at dinner

at a nearby restaurant, followed by individual interviews in the private dining room.

Only one candidate emerged from this process (there was no close second) and this was followed by a visit in the candidate's home community and school system by three members of the committee. Following this, the process was reported to the joint board and the candidate selected was recommended.

Reduced to its essential elements, the foregoing procedure involves five basic steps:

1. Preparing for the search
2. Searching for qualified applicants or candidates
3. Screening paper applications
4. Interviewing those who show potential
5. Selecting the candidate who most nearly fits the requirements.

These five steps represent rather standard procedure; one cannot deviate too far from them. Yet it is recognized that procedures actually used in different districts in the selection of administrators do differ considerably. Perhaps it is the way in which the procedure is carried out that makes the difference.

Procedures in Pennsylvania

A Composite Picture

By developing a composite picture of procedures reported by the individuals responding to the questionnaire, the different ways open to school districts selecting a chief administrator may be emphasized. The composite picture which follows will enable a board of school directors to devise a plan of action based on what has been developed for, or actually used by, other districts. Or, it may stimulate a board of education to

develop a plan which may be uniquely its own.

The Preparation (Step 1)

1. Preparation of a brochure containing information about such things as the school, the community, and qualifications expected of a candidate by one or more of the following:

   a. By the board of school directors.
   b. By the outgoing administrator.
   c. By the community relations staff member.
   d. By a committee appointed to select the administrator.

2. Preparation of a job description for the position by a committee appointed to select the administrator.

3. Selection or development of an application form.

4. Development of a list of questions to be answered by the applicant in paragraph form and returned with the application.

5. Public announcement of the vacancy.

6. Determination of procedure for filing application with one of the following:

   a. With the secretary of the board of school directors.
   b. With the incumbent.
   c. With a designated committee.
   d. With a consultant employed by the board.

The Search (Step 2)

1. Sources for securing potential candidates:

   a. Placement offices of various institutions
   b. Departments of administration of major institutions
   c. Graduate schools of education
   d. Newspaper advertisements
   e. Pennsylvania School Boards Association bulletin advertisement
   f. Pennsylvania Department of Education
   g. Professional administrative organizations of the area, state or nation
   h. Personal contacts with administrators
   i. Commercial placement agencies
   j. Professors of educational administration
   k. University council on educational administration
   l. ASCUS (a national agency of teacher placement bureaus representing colleges of education)
   m. Educational salesmen's organizations.

2. Search conducted directly by the board of school directors.

3. Search conducted by a committee appointed by the board of school directors.

4. Search conducted by a consultant(s) selected by the board of school directors.

   a. Varied patterns

      (1) Pattern described earlier under "One Pennsylvania School District - Selection of a Superintendent."
      (2) Several universities are called upon to recommend consultants. Those recommended are asked to submit a plan including costs. From these reports the board selects one plan and one or more consultants.
      (3) Board of education employs a committee composed of professors of school administration from institutions at least a hundred miles from the district. The board selects one man as chairman and has him in turn select two more of his choice but not from the same institution. (One weakness here lies in the fact that the individuals may know little or nothing about the school district.)

The Screening, the Interview (Steps 3 and 4)

1. The preliminary interviewing and screening may be done by the board of school directors as a whole.

2. The director of personnel may do the preliminary screening.

3. The screening and the interviewing may be done by a committee which recommends from one to five applicants to the board of school directors. The committee may submit credentials with no comment or may submit credentials with ratings and/or a recommendation. The committee, selected by the board, may vary a great deal in its composition. It may be

   a. An educational consultant as a committee of one
   b. A committee composed at least partially of college or university related people
   c. A committee of board members
   d. A committee of board members and members of the administrative staff
   e. A committee of board members and county superintendents
   f. A committee of representatives of board, faculty, administration, and community
   g. A committee of representatives of top administrative staff, secondary and elementary principals, and secondary and elementary teachers
   h. A committee of one or more administrators from other districts along with local district personnel

i. A committee composition was spelled out as follows in one district:

(1) A "Selection Committee" is nominated by the president of the board of school directors. It includes one or more members of the board, the directors of elementary and secondary education in the district, the president of the P.T.A. Council of the district, representatives of the teachers' association and a consultant from the department of educational administration of a university.

4. The screening and interviewing process was delineated as follows in four instances:

a. A board of school directors-faculty committee, after preliminary screening, interviewed the three finalists.
b. A screening committee recommended three or four candidates to the Board Personnel Committee for interviews. The Personnel Committee recommended one candidate to the board for election.
c. The board screened all credentials and invited five to eight candidates to appear for an interview. Two finalists were selected and recalled for a more intensive and searching interview.
d. Several committees were formed: committee of faculty, committee of lay personnel, committee of board. Each was chaired either by a board member or an administrator. The committees separately, then collectively, enumerated qualities, characteristics and duties deemed valuable to the position. Interviews were conducted by a selection committee composed of members of the above committees. Finalists were selected, re-interviewed by the committee and the entire board of school directors, and elected.

5. Examinations of various types may be used in the screening process.

6. Applicants may be screened by the outgoing superintendent.

7. Preparation, distribution and discussion with the board of school directors of lists of suggested questions which the members might use at interviews to obtain the desired information and reactions. These should be a reflection of the conditions and problems which exist in that particular system, and those matters for which that particular board has shown evidence of concern.

8. A file folder for each candidate interviewed, containing all data about him, may be kept by each interviewer.

9. Following an interview, a candidate may be taken on a tour of the community. This may lead the candidate, or a committee member, to raise questions which did not arise during the interview.

10. Although there may be considerable merit in including teacher representation on the reviewing committee, overloading the reviewing committee with teachers is questionable.

The Selection (Step 5)

1. The board of school directors appoints a field visit committee to make a trip to the home community of the one or two most likely candidates. The committee members interview citizens in general, teachers, political leaders, members of the candidate's board of school directors and clergy. The board makes a selection on the basis of this visit.

2. Applicants who meet criteria established and who are interviewed successfully are referred to a specific professional clinic for a psychological evaluation.

3. Each of three finalists meets with the board of school directors in committee informally at dinner on separate days. The board then meets again and makes a final decision.

4. Following the selection, the local education association arranges a reception of some sort for the new administrator and his family, inviting all school employes and board members and their spouses.

Additional Statements

This section contains statements and questions of a miscellaneous nature drawn from the questionnaires used for portions of this study. Their listing below does not necessarily mean they are being advocated; it means only that they are suggestions or comments from the field.

1. Assure all interested applicants that any consideration they may care to give to the position will be kept confidential and that no direct inquiries will be made unless and until they so authorize.

2. In the past it has been customary to promote a building principal to the position of chief school administrator. The board policy has been quite consistent in this area. It must be pointed out, however, that the selection of a building principal is rather rigorous.

3. Is it logical to move the principal up when a superintendent is needed? Are the qualifications for the two positions the same?

4. Board members are ill-equipped for this task (selection of a chief administrator) and spend too much effort on it. A board of school directors should employ professional educators to help. The consulting service can help the board to re-evaluate its role in policy making, to define the desired qualities of the successful candidate, and to do the pre-screening of all candidates.

5. The board should first find the man who can do the job they want done, and then try to get him to accept the position. The man they want may not be actively seeking a change of position.

6. Objective rating of candidates may be tried, but board members, as laymen, have considerable trouble with the rating.

7. The position of chief administrator is one toward which outstanding administrators are guided and eventually selected.

8. Do not completely abandon the new administrator in a strange community when he assumes his duties.

9. Invite promising candidates and their wives to dinner. It is important to know whether or not the wife is likely to fit into the community.

10. The present chief administrator has held this position for more than 12 years. He is only the fifth superintendent of schools for the district since the early 1890's. The second superintendent held the post for 41 years, 1896-1937.

11. The district has no structural procedure to follow in the selection of a new chief administrator since a vacancy occurs so infrequently.

12. It is important that every school system identify--and retain within the system--potential administrators among its teachers and promote their growth so that the system has a pool of recognized, available leaders who can be drawn upon when the need arises. This is of strategic importance in the selection of personnel.

13. The use of consultants to assist with the selection of a new chief administrator does not mean that the board works any less or abrogates any of its responsibilities in this area.

Summary Statement

It is difficult to conceive that any board of school directors in its search for a superintendent is looking for anything less than exceptional leadership. That search, however, is sometimes complicated by the scarcity of top level administrators available for a given position. One factor helping to create that scarcity is the frequent unwillingness of a board of education to pay a salary which will attract capable men or women. But another factor, too, is involved. That second factor is one which emphasizes the complexity and the demands of the position. This has been emphasized by the Dean of the School of Education of the University of Wisconsin.

> "A most telling consideration is the near impossibility of asking one man to satisfy the ever increasing demands of this enormously complex role. To keep up with the burgeoning scholarship of education, to know the nature of competent educational research, to understand broadly what is known and not known about the process of teaching and learning, and to understand what is happening in our society is a set of responsibilities worthy of the noblest of professions."[1]

Although not the only factors, an adequate salary and a recognition of the demands of today's superintendency are two matters which deserve consideration in depth as a board makes its plans to secure a superintendent.

Almost invariably boards of school directors today limit the field of selection, either consciously or unconsciously, by failing actively to seek as candidates, particularly candidates for a superintendency, not only men but women as well. That women are excluded is borne out by the fact that this writer can name only six women who have served, to the date

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[1] Donald J. McCarty, "How to Select a Superintendent." The American School Board Journal, February 1967, page 5.

of this publication, as district superintendents of schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Bristol Borough has had two women superintendents: Miss Matilda Swift Booz who served from 1884 to 1897 as the district's first superintendent, and Miss Louise D. Baggs who served from 1905 to 1924. Miss Amanda Stout was superintendent of schools for the Reading School District from 1929 until her death in 1933. In the Pittston School District Elizabeth Battle served as district superintendent. The dates of her tenure have not been established by the writer. Miss Mary B. McAndrew was elected superintendent of schools for the Carbondale City School District for a four-year term beginning in 1934. Her success in the position is clearly seen in the fact that, following her first term, she was elected to four more four-year terms in the same school district, thus filling the position from 1934 to 1954. Currently, Mrs. Pauline Peterson is superintendent of schools for the East Stroudsburg Area School District. She has, with distinction, been that district's superintendent of schools since June of 1968 and, prior to that, its acting superintendent for a period of two years. These educational pioneers are more than sufficient reason for boards of school directors to broaden their views and to search for both women and men as chief school administrators.

In concluding this area dealing with the selection of the chief administrator for a school district, a quotation is taken from a study conducted in Pennsylvania and Alberta by Raymond G. Fast, a study titled "Some Background Factors of School Superintendents As They Relate to Ratings of Superintendent Effectiveness."

> "Thus, in selecting superintendents, school boards need not consider the candidates' ages or length of experience as important criteria. Rather, they should examine carefully the quality of the

candidate's previous performance, his ability as a strong educational leader, and his knowledge about education generally, and more specifically of the administrative and supervisory processes. Furthermore, they should evaluate their own system in terms of their objectives and the problems facing them and select the candidate who would best meet their needs. They should be willing to make a substantial financial remuneration to the person they feel is right for the system. Finally, once employed, the board must place its complete faith and confidence in the superintendent and seek neither subservience from him, nor attempt to interfere with or restrict him."[1]

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[1] Raymond G. Fast, "Some Background Factors of School Superintendents As They Relate to Ratings of Superintendent Effectiveness." "Bulletin of the Pennsylvania School Study Council," Volume II, Number 3, January 1969, page 8.

THE SELECTION OF A PRINCIPAL

The preceding material dealt with the selection of a superintendent of schools and with the need to pursue that selection with the greatest of care. Nevertheless, a selection process which brings to a given school as chief administrator an individual eminently qualified for that unique situation can find the effectiveness of that person virtually cancelled, or at least greatly reduced, if he is not provided with a supporting administrative staff selected with equal care.

In short, a superintendent requires time not only to perform the required work but also time to think, time to plan, and time to lead a private life of his own away from the job. This time will be available only if he has a highly capable supporting staff including principals who are top-level educators. No superintendent can afford to be saddled with a principal who acts precipitously, a principal who feels he is above occasional consultation with his superior, a principal who seems incapable of making decisions, a principal whose personal ambitions prompt him to commit questionable acts, a principal who is essentially incompetent, or a principal who has any other basic shortcomings. No more need be said to emphasize the importance of the selection of a principal other than to add that the man selected not only fills one extremely important position but also supports another one of top rank.

Much is known about effective procedures that may be followed by a school district embarking upon a course of action designed to aid in the selection of a principal. Unfortunately, too frequently little

of what is known is put to use. At times the process which is used ends up with a certificated individual in the principal's chair but with little beyond this.

The study on which this report is based produced a number of statements from various sections of the Commonwealth relative to selection procedures which incorporated more than simply interviewing candidates recommended by placement offices. Thirteen of these plans are quoted below just as they were submitted. A scrutiny of these procedures could help a district devise a plan which would meet the needs of its own unique situation and help it secure a truly qualified individual.

The first procedure reproduced below has been included, not so much because it provides a comprehensive plan, but rather because it presents a particular point of view. It exemplifies the efforts of some districts to promote to administrative positions teachers from within the local school system. Each of the others is included, almost invariably, because it takes a different point of view or because it suggests a variation of the usual procedure.

Miscellaneous Local District Procedures

1. Traditionally, when a principal was selected the pattern has been to promote from within the staff, if a qualified person were available. This has happened a large percentage of the time, especially in recent years. The ten elementary principals now employed in our district have all worked as classroom teachers in the schools prior to their moving into administration. The same is true for the entire present junior high school and senior high school administrative staffs, a total of nine professional employes.

   Three members of the present central office staff were recruited from outside the school system because qualified personnel were not available among our employes at the time. These included the director of elementary education, director of the business office, and superintendent of maintenance.

During the past 35 years, only five other administrators in the schools have been recruited from outside the system. Two senior high school principals were selected in the 1930's, a junior high school principal in 1942, a director of curriculum in 1948, and a director of elementary education in 1968.

In all probability, the district would continue to select a principal, elementary or secondary, from within the staff, if at all possible. However, in the event a suitable person were not available, as was true for the position of director of elementary education this past spring, we would proceed to establish the qualifications we were looking for--training, background, experience, personality, and so on. The position would be announced to the various university placement offices, applications would be accepted and processed, and initial screening would take place by the chief administrator and his assistant. Several of the better candidates would be invited for an interview with the chief administrator. His recommendation would then be given to the board for approval.

2. Notification is sent to a selected group of universities who prepare students for administrative positions. Schools are selected on the basis of the strengths of their administrative departments and the work which they have done with curriculum in either the elementary or secondary field. A preliminary screening of applicants is done by the chief school administrator and selected staff personnel. When one, two or three candidates have emerged who prove to be acceptable to the screening committee and chief administrator, a representative group of teachers from the school the candidate is to head, are asked to interview the candidates who have emerged. As a final step, the choice or choices agreed upon by the teachers' screening committee and the chief school administrator are interviewed by the school board or a committee of the board. The candidate is recommended by the superintendent to the board for election.

3. The board declares position(s) available. Committees are formed: (a) committee of faculty, (b) committee of lay personnel, (c) committee of board, (d) chaired by either administrator or board member.

Committees, separately, then collectively, enumerate qualities, characteristics and duties that are deemed valuable to the position. A brochure is printed announcing vacancies. Interviews are begun by selection committee composed of members of above committees. Finalists are selected, reinterviewed by the entire board and committee, and elected. Finalists are visited in their home communities and thoroughly investigated. Consultants have not been used to date.

4. When a principalship becomes vacant, the superintendent of schools appoints a screening committee consisting of the assistant superintendent, the director of elementary or secondary education as the case may be, and one or two principals. A profile of the ideal candidate is prepared. The vacancy is announced by notifications listing the profile being sent to college placement offices, college professors, and interested candidates. Local staff members are notified of the vacancy and invited to apply. However, it is pointed out that the best qualified candidate will be selected and we hope it will be a member of our local staff.

The screening committee examines applications, secures credentials and selects from those applying five or six individuals for interviews. When the screening committee has reached agreement on one or two candidates we usually visit these candidates in their school setting for a final evaluation. The committee agreement is then made known to the school board and the candidate to be recommended is brought in to become acquainted with our school board. To date the school board has always accepted the screening committee's recommendation.

5. A selection committee should be nominated by the chief administrative school officer. It should include: the chief administrative school officer, the directors of elementary and secondary education in the district, the department heads (of a secondary school) or grade level chairmen (of an elementary school), the president of the school's PTA, representatives of the teachers' association(s), an appropriate member(s) of the board of school directors.

This selection committee should define the job description of the position and the qualifications for candidates. The committee should provide this job description and the qualifications for candidates to college and university placement offices, to commercial placement bureaus, and to the news media. These documents should also be made known to all potential candidates for the position who are already employed within the school district.

The selection committee should evaluate all written credentials received in response to the action in the paragraph above. The three best candidates should be brought to the district for visitation and for individual and group conferences with the members of the selection committee. The best candidate should be recommended to the board of school directors for employment.

6. The board of school directors of this district has established a policy of promotion from within. Therefore, when a principalship becomes vacant or is established, an announcement is sent to all personnel. The announcement is posted in each building and asks that all who qualify shall forward either a letter of application

or a declaration of interest card to the superintendent of schools. Prospective applicants are given ten days in which to apply. At the close of the application period, the administrative staff screens the applicants and recommends three finalists to the board of school directors. After the board interviews, a decision on the appointment is made cooperatively by the board and the chief school administrator.

7. The chief school administrator determines the qualifications for the position with advice from the board. The vacancy is listed with newspapers, colleges, and universities. Candidates are interviewed and screened by the chief school administrator. The chief school administrator recommends a candidate for election.

If the vacancy is an assistant principalship, the chief school administrator selects up to three qualified candidates. These candidates appear for a second interview with the principal and the chief school administrator. The candidate selected meets approval of both the principal and the chief school administrator. The selected candidate is then recommended to the board for election.

8. As agreed upon with the local professional organization, the opening is announced throughout the local district. Schools of education and placement offices are notified of the vacancy. Local professional personnel may give information on the vacancy to persons in other school districts. When applications are received an interviewing committee is named--superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of instruction, and one principal of the particular area comprise the committee. Interviews are conducted and individual written reports are prepared by committee members. From these reports, a single recommendation will be prepared for submission to the board of school directors.

9. When a principal vacancy occurs, the superintendent forms a committee of five teachers and five administrators to recruit a replacement. The five teachers are members of the faculty in the building where the vacancy exists and the administrators include the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, and three principals. The committee first designs a brochure describing the qualifications of the individual desired and the community. Placement offices are notified and candidates apply directly to the superintendent.

The credentials and other materials submitted by the candidates are screened and five are invited for an interview. The committee interviews each candidate for no less than an hour. They are given a very thorough briefing on the district and two are selected as finalists. The school board interviews the two finalists and generally selects the one recommended by the committee. The

committee visits the community of the two finalists before the board interview. The committee receives an insight into the effectiveness of each man as he performs his job in his present position. The candidates are notified immediately following the board interview.

10. Recommendations of a university professor:

The board of school directors instructs the superintendent to recommend qualified personnel for appointment to principalships. The procedure will be as follows:

a. Select a committee of sub-administrators and teachers to draw up specifications for selection of principals. Committee selection should be consistent with area in which openings are available, i.e., secondary or elementary.
b. Advertise the openings and the specifications within the school district and outside the district.
c. Superintendent's office receives all applications in writing and on pre-selected forms.
d. Committee of the whole screens all applications and selects the best one for recommendation to the board of school directors for appointment. Several names could be submitted if there is more than one acceptable candidate.
e. The screening committee should be selected with care, eliminating those who might have some relationship with particular candidates other than professional, i.e., friendships, relatives, etc.
f. All voting by committee on candidates should be conducted by secret ballot.
g. Board makes final decision and notifies the successful candidate in writing. Notice to unsuccessful candidates is withheld until successful candidate accepts in writing.

11. We listed the position with some 18 institutions that prepare school administrators. We listed the position with the National Association of Secondary School Principals in Washington, D.C. We listed the position with selected individuals who were in a position to know and recommend outstanding administrative prospects. We announced the vacancy to members of our own staff. We prepared a brochure describing the position, the school and the community and copies of this were submitted to the individuals and agencies listed above.

Approximately four months were used for the various interviews. Initially, the high school principal interviewed the candidates. Finally, the high school principal recommended three candidates to the superintendent of schools who, in turn, conducted interviews. After a careful assessment of educational background, experience, and many other qualifications described in the brochure, a selection

was finally made. Since the candidate was selected from our own staff, the problems of orientation were to a degree minimal. However, we did spend several days in helping the individual to understand the functions of his office. These orientation conferences were held with the high school principal, with one of the assistant principals, and with the assistant principal whose position was being filled. In addition, much of the orientation could be handled on a day-to-day basis and even after a year was still continuing.

12. The board sets criteria characteristics, i.e., sex, age, preparation, experience, race, geographical area location, etc. The board decides if it will promote from within the district or look outside the district. Having decided to look outside, the placement bureaus of the service universities, i.e., Pitt, Penn State, Penn, Temple, Columbia, New York, Lehigh and Maryland are asked to make nominations and send credentials. Each application is screened by the outgoing administrator or by a committee of the board or both. Each applicant who meets the criteria and who passes the screening is referred to the office of a specific firm for a psychological evaluation. The field is narrowed to three, each of whom then meets with the board in committee informally at dinner on separate days. Soon after the meeting with the third candidate, the board meets once again and agrees on its final selection. For internal promotion of an elementary or junior high principal, follow sentence five above and the recommendation of the superintendent of schools.

13. Every two years or at the request of fifteen applicants, the school district makes arrangements with the Princeton Testing Bureau to give tests to personnel interested in administrative or staff positions. A rating device giving credit for rank on test, experience in field, credits beyond the certification, and interview are evaluated and the candidate is given a rank on the list. The interview committee is made up of educators from outside the system. The board selects the assistant principals and staff officers from the administrative lists according to rank when presented by the superintendent for approval. Principals are selected from the existing assistant principals on the secondary level and directly from the lists for elementary positions. Coordinators or supervisors are selected in the same manner from the list of administrative applicants according to their ratings.

Miscellaneous Suggestions or Comments

In addition to the ideas that can be found in the foregoing plans, the material received through the questionnaire contained additional suggestions or comments of value. These are listed on the next page.

1. The chief administrator scouts recommended candidates.

2. Administrative personnel consult with the county office.

3. The board of education makes the final selection from a list of screened applicants because the person selected may eventually aspire to the superintendency.

4. Use university consultants in the selection process.

5. Extend the scope of the search to cover more than a given school system, area or a single state.

6. The administration council interviews candidates.

7. Five to ten preparing institutions in three or four states are contacted. Each is asked to send three top candidates.

8. List the administrative vacancy with private recruiting agencies.

9. Contact the county principals' association.

10. The selection committee consists of individuals who represent the board, the faculty, the administration and the community.

11. Advertise the vacancy in the PSBA bulletin.

12. The principals have been selected from qualified teachers within the system and no extensive recruitment procedure was followed.

13. The superintendent talks directly with the chairmen of departments of administration to enhance the possibility of securing good candidates.

14. The selection of principals is the sole responsibility of the chief school administrator.

15. The chief school administrator may be knowledgeable of outstanding candidates in the field that may be desirous of changing positions.

16. Overloading a selection committee with teachers can be questionable. However, teachers have a unique contribution to make as members of such a committee.

17. Consult the Department of Education.

18. Members of a screening committee should be persons with the experience and background essential to the task to be performed.

19. It is desirable for the board of school directors to adopt a policy to guide the superintendent in the selection of a principal.

RELATED FACTORS

As one considers the selection of an administrator for a public school, there are three areas that might be developed in terms of the selection of either a chief administrator or a principal. These three areas, to be considered briefly, are the question of promotion from within the staff, the preparation of a brochure as a means to provide basic information for potential candidates, and a general treatment of related selection devices.

Promotion Within a Staff

Many of the replies to the Department of Education questionnaire which provided the basis for this publication emphasized repeatedly, and often with an element of pride, the extent to which administrative vacancies have been filled by promotion from within the staff of the local school system. More than one administrator in commenting on the selection of administrators for his school system pointed to the fact that with perhaps only two or three exceptions no "outsider" had been elected for a period of many, many years.

It is not the purpose here to be overly critical of such a procedure for at least two reasons. In the first place, for reasons of staff morale, there is much to be said for promotion within the system. In the second place, every school system best knows its own needs and can, therefore, most adequately determine its own procedures which, in this case, could well mean the promotion of deserving staff members.

It is the purpose here, however, to raise a question which can be deliberated in each district as it determines its own policies. Deliberation--or debate--on the extent to which administrative positions should be filled by promoting individuals already on a given staff might be based on the following statement:

> "Finally, innovations and modifications seem also to be influenced by the career routes of administrators. Carlson's study of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' indicates that change or innovations seldom occur--or are less likely to occur--in those districts where two consecutive superintendents are appointed from within that district. Promotion of more than one insider tends to result in stagnation for even the highly innovative school districts."[1]

Although this finding of Richard Carlson makes specific reference to the position of superintendent, one might consider its applicability to the position of principal as well.

The Brochure

Reference was made earlier to the preparation of a brochure to facilitate dissemination of information about the vacancy. An analysis of brochures received in the Bureau of Administrative Leadership Services from school districts within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and from districts in other states showed that such brochures contained a number of items of which the following were most common:

1. Announcement of the vacancy.
2. Maps showing one or more of the following:
   a. Location of the district as related to the rest of the state and other states.
   b. The historical heritage of the community.

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[1] Edmonds, Fred, James B. Kinocheloe, and James R. Ogletree, Procedures for the In-Service Education of School Administrators. Bulletin of the Bureau of School Service, College of Education, University of Kentucky, September 1968, page 6.

c. Location of colleges and universities within a reasonable area.

d. Location of the schools within the district.

3. Description of the school district.

4. Description of the schools.

5. Description of the selection procedure to be followed.

6. Position description.

7. Criteria for the position.

8. State regulations for the needed certificate for the position.

9. Data form to be completed by the applicant.

10. General objectives of the school.

11. School program.

12. Description of the community including:

    a. Industries

    b. Cultural and educational advantages

    c. Churches

    d. Recreation facilities in the area

    e. Communication media--newspapers, radio, television

13. Projections relative to the school system.

14. Evaluation and tax rate.

15. Pertinent information and data.

16. List of questions which may be asked of applicants.

17. Board-superintendent or board-principal relationships, whichever is applicable.

18. Statement relative to the retiring superintendent or principal, whichever is applicable.

19. Statement on "The Challenge of the Position."

Related Selection Devices

There are districts which, when selecting a principal (or a superintendent), place rather heavy reliance on such devices as transcripts, letters of recommendation, rating scales, tests, and interviews. All these have their place if they are used judiciously. However, they do have their limitations.

In 1967 the American Association of School Administrators issued a publication titled, "The Right Principal for the Right School." Pages 35-41 of the publication contain worthwhile material on the value of the use of the devices enumerated above. Immediately below is material taken from the pages indicated.

> The Transcript. A school district using this device will encounter problems such as: comprehending "the endless variety of course numbers and titles offered at universities"; "judging the quality of instruction in a course taken"; judging the meaning of grades awarded; and dealing with transcript semantics.[1]
>
> Letters of Recommendation. ". . . written credentials or letters of recommendation have some value in identifying the least likely candidates but do little to aid discrimination among the good, better, and best." "The latest horoscope for the candidate might be as valid and as reliable as letters of recommendation or credentials." "The position of principal is sufficiently important to warrant making a few telephone calls to corroborate opinions or to seek elaboration upon, or interpretations of, judgments rendered in a letter of recommendation."[2]
>
> Rating Scales. "However, most ratings are about as valid as letters of recommendation from unknown admirers."[3]

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[1] AASA Committee on the Selection of School Principals, The Right Principal for the Right School. Washington, D.C.: American Association of School Administrators, 1967, page 36.

[2] Ibid., pages 36-37.

[3] Ibid., page 37.

Tests. "If used indiscriminately or administered without appropriate directions, conditions, or precautions, they can be a waste of time and money and create an illusion of objectivity." "Universities are in a unique position to serve as administration centers for most tests used in principal selection. Special talents within universities can ensure proper test administration, objective results, and appropriate interpretation of scores."[1]

The Interview. "Research suggests that the interview tends to be grossly over-rated." "It remains, however, one of the few personal contacts with the applicant, and few people recommend its abandonment."[2]

Other writers have made statements which might well be considered by chief school administrators and boards of school directors as they evaluate the credentials of a potential elementary principal. The following have merit.

Men - Women. "This study does not present evidence that a woman principal should always be preferred over the man who may also be a candidate. It does indicate, however, that as a class men are not overwhelmingly superior to women as elementary school principals. The evidence appears to favor women if the job of the principal is conceived in a way that values working with teachers and outsiders; being concerned with objectives of teaching, pupil participation, and evaluation of learning; having knowledge of teaching methods and techniques; and gaining positive reactions from teachers and superiors."[3]

Experience. "The evidence on the value of experience is not as clear-cut as the professional educator might like. . . . Those principals who have little administrative experience tend to follow suggestions made by others and to discuss with others before taking final action. Those with more administrative experience respond to outsiders, direct the work of others, and analyze the situation. It would seem that the performance of those with more, rather than less, experience would result in somewhat better instructional programs."[4]

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[1] Ibid., page 39.

[2] Ibid., page 40.

[3] Hemphill, John K., Daniel E. Griffiths, and Norman Frederiksen, Administrative Performance and Personality. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1962, page 334.

[4] Ibid., page 335.

Personality. "Candidates for the position of elementary school principal might first be screened for mental ability and professional knowledge. Personality measures can best make a contribution if used in conjunction with mental ability and professional knowledge tests. It is suggested that personality tests be employed at the second stage of a selection procedure. The first step would be to screen the candidates to ascertain that they had the high general and professional ability needed to perform effectively in the different areas of the job. Personality tests could then be employed to make selections among those candidates who have met the first screening requirement."[1]

Mental Abilities and Knowledge. Relationships between mental ability and factors involved in the principalship ". . . could be useful in the selection of principals."[2]

Interest Inventories. "If a school district can describe the principal it desires in terms of the factors which have been identified, then some "(inventory tests) should be considered for use in selecting the desired principals."[3]

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[1] Ibid., page 337.

[2] Ibid., page 338.

[3] Ibid., page 339.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The crux of the selection process, whether it be for the selection of a chief administrator or of a principal, is well stated in The Right Principal for the Right School:

> "Selection devices become operative once a pool of interested persons have been identified. The challenge is to separate the outstanding from the ordinary or incompetent by using pre-determined criteria as guidelines."[1]

Today, particularly because of three new dimensions--student unrest, teacher militancy and negotiations, and community involvement--it is imperative that the process established for the selection of a principal or of a chief school administrator be such that every step is designed to assure the ultimate selection of a man who will be able to meet the demands of the position and at the same time satisfy the interested groups who wish a voice in his selection.

The Bureau of Administrative Leadership Services of the Department of Education is prepared to offer service designed to help assure the selection of such an individual. The Bureau feels that it cannot, on the basis of a telephone call or a letter, recommend an administrator holding a position in one school system in the Commonwealth for a position in another system in the Commonwealth. However, it does feel that, insofar as available staff time permits, it is in a position to offer assistance through consultation, through making available copies of materials prepared by various school districts in their search for administrators, and through service on screening committees.

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[1] AASA Committee on the Selection of School Principals, The Right Principal for the Right School. Washington, D.C.: American Association of School Administrators, 1967, page 34.

APPENDIX A

Criteria for Applicant for Position of Superintendent of Schools
_____ School District

The following criteria will be used by the employing board. The ideal candidate would, of course, meet all specifications. An aspiring candidate will not be passed over because of variance with some items.

A. Professional Preparation

1. Eligibility by certification for the Pennsylvania school superintendency.
2. Professional preparation as a classroom teacher.
3. A strong background in curriculum, supervision, school organization, and administration--both elementary and secondary.

B. Professional Experience

1. Several years of successful experience as a classroom teacher.
2. Experience as a chief school administrator or assistant chief school administrator.
3. Experience with scheduling, curriculum, and direct responsibility for teacher personnel.

C. Personal Characteristics

1. Desired age range: 35 to 50 years.
2. Married man preferred.
3. A store of physical stamina and vitality with an unquenchable zeal to enrich the lives of boys and girls.
4. Shall have reached a professional maturity that comprehends the implications and magnitude of our educational program for tomorrow's youth.

D. General Competencies

1. Must be capable of delegating responsibility and evaluating results.
2. Demonstrated ability to lead in curricular development in a public school system.
3. Demonstrated ability to provide effective leadership in educational organization and administration.
4. Ability to work harmoniously with the school board and staff and develop a strong school-community relationship.
5. Understanding of school finance, business procedures, school law, building programs, and public relations.
6. Should be able to speak and write correctly and concisely.

APPENDIX B

Criteria for Selecting Superintendent
(Things to look for in casual conversation)
_____ School District

1. Good character, unquestioned morals and integrity, and an excellent reputation among the intelligent leaders in the communities in which he has previously served.

2. Good and sound judgment, ability to think independently and to rely on facts and sound logical arguments rather than on prejudices and emotions.

3. Business ability evidenced by previous success in handling business matters for which he was responsible, an appreciation of the value of the public dollar, and a realization that no educational program is valid unless it is based on good business principles.

4. Educational leadership in the community as well as in the school system. Ability to get along well with people, to deal effectively with associates, and to stimulate them to increased effort and accomplishment.

5. Sympathetic understanding of the needs and problems of children and youth.

6. Reasonable aggressiveness in promoting a workable program for the advancement of the schools under his direction.

7. Skill in seeking and obtaining well-qualified personnel, both professional and non-professional, as needed, and in giving them assignments that will enable them to use their capacities to the full.

8. Ability and willingness to assume responsibilities, to stand criticism, and to defend with appropriate tact positions taken.

9. A comprehensive grasp of public relations designed to help the community understand what the schools are doing and to secure the cooperation of the public.

10. Strong personality with such pleasing traits as sincerity, tactfulness, courtesy, saving sense of humor, loyalty, and the like.

11. Ability to speak forcefully before public meetings.

12. Leadership in educational circles as evidenced by positions held in regional, state, or national educational associations, and by publications.

13. Adequate training at the graduate level in educational administration.

14. Previous experience as superintendent or other advisory capacity, or other acceptable experience.

APPENDIX C

Criteria for Applicant for Position of Principal
_____ School District

The following descriptions and qualifications are outlined to help college officials in nominating candidates and to assist potential applicants in evaluating their qualifications.

A. Professional Training and Experience

The candidate:

1. Should possess a strong liberal education.
2. Should have pursued an educational program well beyond the master's degree with specialized preparation in school administration, supervision, and curriculum.
3. Should possess the doctorate or have committed himself to the completion of such a program.
4. Should possess or be eligible for a secondary principal's certificate issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
5. Should have a background of successful classroom teaching experience.
6. Should have a background of successful public school administrative experience, preferably in a high school with more than 800 students.

B. General Competencies

The candidate:

1. Should be capable of exerting strong education leadership.
2. Should be able to work effectively with professional staff members and with individuals and groups within the community.
3. Should be able to communicate effectively.
4. Should be committed to his profession.
5. Should be capable of identifying problems, designing corrective programs, and implementing change.
6. Should be concerned with instructional procedures and capable of instituting change in this area.
7. Should be creative, flexible, and imaginative.
8. Should be a "team man."
9. Should be competent in decision making, programming, and delegating, stimulating, communicating, coordinating, and evaluating.

APPENDIX D

Suggested Questions for School Director Interviews
of Candidates for the District Superintendency

The purpose of the interview is to get evidence that the candidate possesses the qualifications desired by the Board of School Directors for the position of superintendent of the school district.

The interview should be informal, yet businesslike. Keep in mind that during the interview you are forming impressions about the candidate, but he, too, is forming impressions about you and what his relationship to you might be if he were to be elected superintendent of the school district.

At the end of each interview each member of the Board of School Directors should complete the attached "evaluation" sheet and hold it for final evaluation of all the candidates interviewed.

An informal approach by the chairman of the interview meeting might be something like this:

> "Mr. X, we would like first to know something about you, your background, training, and experience. Won't you take a few minutes, please, to introduce yourself in a manner which you think would be helpful in relating your qualifications and competencies for the superintendency of this district."

Subsequent questions, or topics of discussion, should follow easily from this opening statement. They should have references to:

1. The candidate's philosophy of education, what the schools should accomplish, and how they might be organized to achieve these purposes.

2. How the candidate would familiarize himself with the internal operation of the school, the community and its interests, strengths and weaknesses of the school system, and so forth.

3. The candidate's familiarity and point of view with respect to recent innovations in educational practices, such as:

   a. team teaching
   b. use of educational television
   c. use of programmed learning
   d. advanced college placement
   e. merit rating of teachers
   f. recent changes in science, mathematics, foreign language, etc.

4. The candidate's concept of public relations.

5. The candidate's concept of the respective functions of the board of education, the superintendent and the administrative staff.

6. What the candidate has done in his own community to improve the schools.

7. Do you have a letter of eligibility for the superintendent's commission in Pennsylvania?

Other Areas for Questions for Candidates for District Superintendency

1. Teachers these days are becoming quite militant about such matters as salaries and fringe benefits. How would you deal with their requests?

2. One of the major problems these days is providing children with knowledge that is up-to-date and in harmony with recent technological advances. What steps would you take to insure the Board and community that pupils are receiving a modern education?

3. What is your opinion of where and how vocational education can best be provided? (specialized versus comprehensive high school)

4. What are your ideas about teacher rating and evaluation?

5. The maintenance of the school plant is a real problem due to limited funds and shortage of top flight workmen. How would you go about insuring the Board and the community that this aspect of administration is being efficiently handled?

6. What is your opinion about the role of the superintendent in dealing with the public on matters relating to taxation, school bond issues, board elections, juvenile delinquency, et al?

7. What are your views about pupil discipline?

8. Do you think this school system should experiment with "team teaching" or adhere to the traditional patterns of the self-contained classroom?

9. What are your interests outside of school work?

10. What salary would you have to have to become our chief school administrator?

11. Are you willing for a Board committee to visit the community where you are presently employed?

APPENDIX E

Interview Evaluation - Vacancy, District Superintendent
_____ School District

Name of Candidate _____ Evaluated by _____
Date of Interview _____

Characteristic	Excellent	Good	Fair
Voice			
Appearance			
Ease in meeting people			
Ability to relate well to other people			
Sense of humor			
Ability to think clearly			
Ability to speak concisely			
Range of vocabulary			
Willingness to listen and take suggestions			
Seems to have good business sense			
Appreciates value of public dollar			
Displays reasonable aggressiveness			
Understanding of good school-community relations			
Seems to understand the needs of children and youth			
Likely to wear well			

(Not to be checked in the presence of candidate)

Strongest quality observed _____

Weakest quality observed _____

Other observations _____

_____

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